

GAS AND WATER SUPPLY.

Newbury.—A correspondent of the *Reading Mercury* says, with reference to a recent note on the gas question in this town,—"The remarks which you extracted last week from *The Builder*, appear to be fully entitled to further consideration. The plain fact is this, that gas can now be manufactured at a cheaper rate than in former years, from the circumstance of coal itself being cheaper, and the transit from the pit to the consumer being so very much reduced in charge. In London the price of gas is much below our rate, and although I allow that the great consumption admits of so much lower a charge, yet there is not the proportionate difference in the rate per foot of Newbury and London gas. As to the towns in the North, the price is 50 per cent. below us: it is true, however, that the coal-pit is close to the retort, but it is also true that the Cannel coal used there gives in one foot as much illuminating power as three feet of our gas coal. However, we live in cheap times, and we must have cheap light: the day-light is now admitted free of duty, and the gas light must not stand at the old protection price. The influx of coals will soon rival the influx of corn, and I do not see how the gas company has any right to insist upon two burners where there was formerly only one, before they sink the price."

Preston.—The local *Guardian* is agitating the water and gas questions. The water supply appears to be in a very unsatisfactory state, although few towns are so favourably situated as Preston for a constant supply of good water, and in few places should the inhabitants and the town be furnished with it at so cheap a rate. Yet what is the fact? says our authority. "While at Greenock, Ayr, Warrington,* Paisley, Campbelltown, and other smaller places, a cottager renting at 5*l.* is supplied with water at an average of 3*s.* 6*d.* a year, in Preston he must pay 6*s.* or 7*s.* Even in Nottingham, where an expensive mechanical process has to be employed, small cottagers are supplied with water from 20 to 30 per cent. less than cottagers in this town. In Glasgow, the Gorbals waterworks, to which there are three filters, are constructed to supply water at the rate of 32 gallons per day for each inhabitant, yet the charges are 25 per cent. less than in Preston, where the company cannot supply more than a third of the above quantity to the town, and that in a totally unfiltered state. In short, if a complete return could be obtained of the prices charged for water throughout the kingdom, we venture to say that Preston would appear among the highest." The Gas Company, according to the *Guardian*, has not been "quite so liberal and unaccommodating." The company (says a defender of it) having obtained rising dividends by good management, made a reduction in the price of gas amounting to something like 35 to 40, and he believed even to 50 per cent., at different times; and, added Mr. German, with inimitable *saïeté*, 'they had never exceeded 10 per cent. dividend.' What a 'Madam Blaise' of a company, to be sure! The force of self-denial could no further go. All joking apart, however, we believe that even if the gas company were again to reduce its terms, it might still divide its 10 per cent., for what the company might temporarily lose in price, it would ultimately gain in permanently increased consumption. The success of past reductions (though they have not been so spontaneous as Mr. German appears to think) confirms us in this belief. A reduction in the company's terms would offer an immediate inducement to so desirable an improvement, whereas an obstinate adherence to the present charges may drive the local board to seek for the means of self-defence in gas-works of its own."

Charley.—The high price of gas here also is complained of. A defender of the company, however, argues that "as the average dividends paid to the shareholders for a number of years past has very little exceeded the legal rate of interest, even to the holders of the

original shares, it is self-evident that the company have done all in their power to serve the public consistently with self-protection." Here is the stupid mistake of all gas companies, who have defended and maintained high prices. Would they but consult their own class returns to Parliament in something like an enlightened spirit of self-interest, they would at once be assured of its being "self-evident" that it was precisely because they had done little or nothing to serve the public that their own profits had continued at so low an ebb. In the present instance it is said that "with an extension of the company's works, and a contemplated increased consumption of gas, it is highly probable that the present price to the consumer may be gradually reduced;" and the sooner the better for all parties.

Wareham.—The Gas Company here, it seems, have been "labouring under disadvantages in securing public and private gas-lights," a difficulty sufficiently accounted for by the fact that their charge is 10*s.* a thousand cubic feet. They have, therefore, or "notwithstanding," as they have it, reduced the price to 8*s.* 4*d.*, and we doubt not when they have repeated the experiment two or three times in all, they will find that their difficulties and disadvantages have all vanished along with their high and unprofitable, because impracticable, prices.

IMPORTANT TO CONTRACTORS OF SCAFFOLDING.

THE EXECUTOR OF CONNOR V. SMITH.
SOMERSET COUNTY COURT.

Where a contractor erects scaffolding, and the building falls into Chancery, it is held he cannot take the scaffolding away, or recover its value from the alleged mortgagee of the buildings.

This action, brought to recover 50*l.* for hire of scaffolding, elicited some legal opinions of value to the building profession. The case lasting several hours, a digest must suffice. From the evidence, it appeared the plaintiffs are executors of Connor, an Irishman, who came to London, without a penny in his pocket, or any recommendation, and found friends amongst the boys of his dear country, who, with a most benevolent Catholic priest, Father Moore, of the Oratory of St. Loretto, Commercial-road East, nourished Connor, until he, in English parlance, was up to the mark. Connor's first job, although of stature for a Magog of Guildhall, was to feed the hawk. His next advancement in the masonic art (he died a good mason) was to carry the bod. His wages were, without overtime, fifteen shillings per week, and, upon an average, Tim Connor received from Messrs. Cubitt eighteen shillings per week. Tim's fortune was made. A red-bering and a penny loaf breakfasted him: his dinner was supplied by counting the rings of the ladder he had to toddle; and when the bell rung and time-keeper struck, Tim left the boys, to have, alone, a sumptuous feast—a pint of coffee, an egg, an onion, and two pounds of bread. Tim, in a year's time, learned the art of bricklaying. By industry and abstemiousness, in two years he started as a scaffolder. No Norway pines came from Spitzbergen with their tapering lengths, but Tim was in the market. He would run up a scaffold "five *monuments* high." In course of a few years Mr. Connor expected to be called "Sir," and which was followed up by being termed "Squire," and his field a "firm" under another name. This prosperity was too promising to last, for the "firm" got hold of a nice piece of ground with some builders' skeletons, mortgaged five or six names deep, over and over again. Tim had supplied the scaffolding to this promising speculation, and at last advanced his capital to complete the undertaking, without requesting a legal man to examine the title-deeds—for he hated the names of the varmint. The sequel may be soon told. Tim lost all his hard earnings, and got seriously involved, which so affected him, that he at last drank so deeply of the "erater" as to die with delirium tremens. His will, which was produced, is one of the most extraordinary documents ever seen. There is scarcely a scaffold-pole which is now rotting outside his promising estate he has not privately marked, and these he has left in batches of three poles or planks to separate friends; and it may be with truth affirmed, that the boys of Calmel-buildings, Cato-street, and Saffron-hill, are left exceedingly rich in "castles in the air." One little obstacle, however, in the way of obtaining their rights is the defendant, the first mortgagee, and the Court of Chancery. The executor, as a last resource, now sued the defendant for the hire of the scaffolding, and great were their lamentations when a verdict was given for the defendant, with costs.

INTERIOR OF THE CHAPTER-HOUSE AND CLOISTER, MAYENCE CATHEDRAL.

THIS cathedral labours under a disadvantage to which many of our own have been subject, but from which mostly they are in course of emancipation. The houses are so crowded against its walls, that the principal entrance can be gained only by narrow passages, between mean and offensive buildings. The east end, however, abuts upon an open space. The mass of the fabric is in the Romanesque style; but there is much work of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries; and one of its six towers is a modern and not very successful imitation of ancient work. The interior, which is plain, except as regards some fine traceried windows, is chiefly remarkable for its numerous monuments to Archbishops of Mayence, the premier Electors of the German empire, and to other dignitaries. They are said to be seventy-eight in number, and range through a period from A.D. 1200 almost down to the present day. Many are of great beauty; but the later ones are of very questionable taste.

Not the least interesting portion of this noble pile of building is the chapter-house and cloister. The chapter-house, which is of the Romanesque period, is entered through a fine fourteenth-century floor on the south side of the cathedral, which has replaced without wholly removing the traces of its elaborate predecessor of the Romanesque date. The archiepiscopal chair belongs to the original work. The monumental elms in the floor are mostly deeply carved, and were originally placed in an upright position against the walls, as their fellows within the cathedral still remain. They are suffering much from their present position.

The cloister is a work of the fourteenth century, enclosing three sides of a quadrangle, completed on the fourth or north side by the cathedral itself. The work is good, but suffering from neglect. The doorway to the right in the engraving opens into a small chapel, which borrows its light from the cloister.

CHEVREUIL'S SYSTEMATIZATION OF COLOUR.

THE first chromatic circle by that distinguished investigator has been completed, and consists of the simple and binary colour fixed on cotton by dyeing processes. The seventy-two colours of the circle are placed at equal distances and as these distances have been determined now, and as twenty-three of them, at least, relate to twenty-three colours of the solar spectrum, already fixed by *Fraunhofer*, of Munich, the reproduction of the chromatic circle any where becomes a matter of comparative ease. M. Chevreuil is occupied in the determination of the colour of the most remarkable bodies, organic and inorganic. On the other hand, Messrs. Salvétat and Ebelman, at Severs, are making chromatic circles of porcelain. At the Gobelins there are making in dyed wool nine other circles, comprising each the seventy-two colours of the first circle darkened by black,—and thus, in fine, it will be possible to determine all the colours called *robottes* or *rompus* (terms peculiar to M. Chevreuil), as the first circle enables us to determine the colours called *franches*. By aid of this ingenious systematization we can determine that the brick colour, one of the most general, is the "first orange-red of the first circle, darkened by three-tenths of black;" that the colour of oak is "the orange of the first circle, darkened by five-tenths of the black." The correspondence on and copying of colours at great distances, have thus become matters of mathematical accuracy.

IMPROVEMENTS PAY.—LAND IN THE CITY.—The new street to London Bridge is now in shape, and the frontages are being let at very large rents. We understand, for example, that for about 100 feet in Cannon-street, from Crooked-lane to St. Martin's-lane, extending about 60 feet up the former, but not anything like so deep throughout, the sum of 720*l.* per annum has been obtained. Further, the person who has obtained it expects to get much more in proportion for a part of it.

* In Warrington the charge for water is at the rate of 1*s.* in the pound on the rent, and this includes supply for all domestic purposes, and also for water-closets.